

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI**

Re: *Streamlining Licensing Procedures for Small Satellites*, IB Docket No. 18-86.

A few weeks ago, I had the chance to visit Launchpad 39A at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida. That's where numerous historic space missions launched—including Apollo 11, which sent the first humans to the moon, and Apollo 13, the “successful failure” which set a record for the farthest distance humans ever traveled from Earth. It's a testament to human ingenuity that since those missions, we have expanded the variety and increased the quantity of objects launched into space, including recently a car.

In recent years, for example, smaller, less-expensive satellites with short-duration missions—often known as “small satellites”—that are often used for scientific research by universities, and increasingly for commercial operations, have also been developed and launched into space. Their numbers have grown, and with them a problem: more satellites mean more regulatory reviews, but our current rules weren't designed with these smaller satellites in mind.

Today, we begin the process for solving this problem. We aim to streamline the process for authorizing commercial small-satellite operations. If operators want to launch satellites with certain characteristics, such as short orbital lifetimes, they could choose to file under a new, alternative small satellite process. These procedures would be less burdensome while still preserving FCC interests in issues like efficient spectrum use and limiting orbital debris. We also ask a number of questions, including about application fees, that will inform our decision-making as we consider implementing this new process.

This is yet another measure the FCC is taking to address one of its own continuing missions: encouraging innovation through next-generation technologies. Easing the regulatory burdens for new space missions and research using small satellites will ultimately benefit everyone from academic researchers to small businesses.

Thank you to the dedicated staff who worked on this item: Jose Albuquerque, Christopher Bair, Stephen Duall, Jennifer Gilsenan, Karl Kensinger, Daudeline Meme, Sankar Persaud, Tom Sullivan, Troy Tanner, and Merissa Velez from the International Bureau; Patrick Forster, Michael Ha, Nicholas Oros, Jamison Prime, and Ron Repasi from the Office of Engineering and Technology; Scot Stone from the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau; Roland Helvajian from the Office of Managing Director; and Deborah Broderson, David Horowitz, and Andrea Kelly from the Office of General Counsel.